

COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 15th October, 1951.

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CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY

COMMITTEE ON RULES OF PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES

European Flag

Memorandum by the Secretariat-General

I. At a meeting held in London on 26th July, the question of a flag for the Council of Europe was submitted for consideration by the Sub-Committee.

II. The Sub-Committee agreed that this problem should be included in its agenda and that a draft Convention should be prepared for submission to the Committee of Ministers with a view to establishing the design of the flag, the conditions governing its use and the measures to be taken for its protection.

III. In the face of the numerous designs presented by the Secretariat-General, or submitted by private individuals, the Sub-Committee requested the Secretariat to make an initial selection, to arrange for the printing of some of the designs and submit them to the Committee with a view ultimately to ascertaining the views of the Assembly thereon. The designs accordingly selected have been circulated with this memorandum and a sufficient number of copies of them have been printed for distribution to the Assembly in such form and at such time as the Committee may decide.

IV. The designs should be considered in the light of the following observations:

Proposal 1

Flag of the European Parliamentary Union and Pan-European Movement. Count Coudenhove-Kalergi, in an official letter, proposed this flag on behalf of the European Parliamentary Union.

He later verbally expressed his intention of withdrawing his proposal.

Proposal 2

The green cross on a white background, which will be found in proposal 4, is opposed by those who consider that a flag with a predominantly white background is too easily soiled and who submit proposal 2 in its place.

Prince Schwarzenberg proposed the same general design, but with a yellow cross on a red background, being a reproduction of the labarum of Constantine. Finally, a member of the staff of the Secretariat-General has proposed a green standard (as presented by Pope Leo III to Charlemagne at the latter's coronation), bearing a red cross (representing the blood shed in fratricidal struggles) superimposed on a yellow cross (emblem of the Christian world and of the Vatican).

Proposal 3.

When verbally expressing his intention of withdrawing his proposal (1), Count Coudenhove-Kalergi put forward proposal 3, in effect the Cross of St. George, which has since the First Crusade been the flag of England.

Proposal 4

A white background, symbol of purity and peace and the emblem of authority, bears a green cross, Christian symbol of hope and youth, which suggests at the same time the meeting at Strasbourg of the main European highways. Green and white have been the colours of the European Movement since its inception. It has been suggested that the inclusion of the Strasbourg coat of arms in the centre of the cross be restricted to the flags of leading personalities of the Assembly, the Committee of Ministers and the Secretariat-General. The ordinary flag would therefore consist only of a green cross on a white background. It might constitute the basis of a series of flags, which the Specialised Authorities and other institutions sponsored by the Council of Europe might be authorised to use with an appropriate distinguishing emblem superimposed.

Proposal 5

The green and white adopted by the European Movement are retained. The Cross of St. Andrew is included as representing one of the oldest and most popular European emblems which has appeared in the case of the Cross of Burgundy, emblem of the "Grand Duchy of the West".

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Proposal 6

The various colours appear in the proportion in which they exist in the flags of Member States of the Council, with the white and red triangle representing the colours of Strasbourg.

Proposal 7

The United Europe flag is shown so to speak "the opposite way round" to the flag of the United States of America. The number of stars corresponds to the number of Member States.

Proposal 8

This symbol is used in the International code of signals for merchant shipping to represent the letter "E". The colours are blue and red which can be held to symbolise the conservative and progressive trends represented in the European Parliaments.

Proposal 9

The star in a circle was in 1944-45 the insignia of the armies of Liberation.

Proposal 10

The author has sought to design a "European Cross", to take its place with the Cross of Lorraine, the Maltese Cross, etc.

Proposal 11

The red background represents progress, the hand fidelity and the sun justice and hope

Proposal 12

The green and blue have the symbolic meaning stated above. The number of stars corresponds to the number of the Member States of the Council.